

To: Martha Maciel[mmaciel@blm.gov]
From: The Hill
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Subject: Overnight Energy: Arctic refuge drilling bill moves to Senate floor | Trump to roll back monuments next week | Energy regulator denies 'conspiracy' over seating new members
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ARCTIC DRILLING BILL MOVES FORWARD: The Senate Budget Committee voted Tuesday to pass its bill combining the Republicans' tax bill with the legislation to permit oil and natural gas drilling in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

The measure was approved by a party-line vote of 12-11, with two key Republicans voting for the measure after previously expressing concerns about the tax overhaul.

The vote sends the measure to the Senate floor, where the bill could start to be considered as early as Wednesday. Overhauling the tax code is a top priority for Republicans and they are hoping to get legislation to President Trump's desk by Christmas.

Monday evening, two GOP senators, Ron Johnson (Wis.) and Bob Corker (Tenn.), had left the door open to voting against the measure in committee if their concerns weren't addressed before then. Johnson has expressed concerns that the bill doesn't do enough to help pass-through businesses, while Corker is concerned about the impact on the debt.

However, they ultimately decided to vote in favor of the measure.

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, chaired by ANWR drilling champion Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), passed the ANWR drilling legislation earlier in November.

It requires the Interior Department to offer two drilling rights leases of at least 400,000 acres in ANWR's coastal plain within 10 years.

The entire package is being considered under the budget reconciliation process, so it needs only 51 votes to pass, not the usual 60 needed for Senate legislation.

Environmentalists slammed the Budget Committee vote on Tuesday.

"Those supporting this legislation know no shame. They will sacrifice anything -- from our pristine Arctic to programs and policies that save American lives -- to fork over billions in tax cuts and giveaways to the wealthiest people and corporate polluters," Sierra Club Resist Campaign Director Maura Cowley said in a statement.

Read more [here](#).

ARCTIC OCEAN DRILLING GETS THE GREEN LIGHT: Meanwhile, the Trump administration signed off on a plan Tuesday to explore for oil in the Arctic Ocean.

The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) on Tuesday granted a permit for Italian oil giant Eni SpA to drill an exploratory well in the Beaufort Sea as a way to test production conditions there.

The permit means the company could begin work on its exploratory well as early as next month.

The decision is the first time the federal government has allowed a company to explore for oil in the American portion of Arctic waters in two years.

Obama administration regulators set tight standards for Arctic Ocean oil drilling, and eventually proposed a moratorium on drilling lease sales there.

But the Trump administration has looked to encourage drilling activities both on and offshore. The Interior Department approved Eni's drilling plan in July, and officials are considering a rewrite of Obama's offshore drilling plan, potentially opening up more areas of the Arctic for development in the future.

Read more [here](#).

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In today's Hillcast PM View, the daily evening update on what went down in Washington: Democrats nix a scheduled White House meeting after a Trump tweet raised the specter of a shutdown; the GOP makes progress on some major tax obstacles; and a court prepares to rule on who really runs the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Host Niv Elis talks to The Hill's Scott Wong, Naomi Jagoda, and Sylvan Lane about what happened today on Capitol Hill. [Listen here](#).

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REPORT: TRUMP TO ROLL BACK MONUMENTS NEXT WEEK: Trump will travel to Utah next week and announce he will shrink at least two national monuments, The Salt Lake Tribune [reported](#) Tuesday.

Trump will visit Salt Lake City to detail plans to shrink the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments, according to the report, which added that he will not visit the monuments or stay overnight in the state.

The White House told The Hill it did not have an update on Trump's schedule for next week.

Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch (R) said in October that Trump had committed to reducing Bears Ears, a monument designated by former President Obama in his final month in the Oval Office. And a Hatch staffer said earlier this month that Trump will shrink the 1.9-million-acre Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument by about a half.

Conservationists have vowed to sue over the president's ability to rescind a monument's designation.

Read more [here](#).

FERC CHAIRMAN SAYS NO 'CONSPIRACY' BEHIND SLOW SWEARING-IN: Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) chairman Neil Chatterjee said Tuesday that there's no "conspiracy" to delay swearings-in for two new commissioners.

Republican Kevin McIntyre -- who is slated to be the new chairman of the body -- and Democrat Richard Glick were confirmed by the Senate Nov. 2, and President Trump recently processed their paperwork for ascension to the commission. But they have not been sworn in.

"I do want to be clear with everybody: you guys are reading way too much into this. There is no conspiracy here. There is no intentional delay or dragging things out to some nefarious end," Chatterjee said after speaking at a Consumer Energy Alliance event.

"It's simply a matter of timing, prioritization, getting documents signed. Then, once the documents are signed ... people have to unwind their own professional obligations in their current jobs before they can transition over. Last week was Thanksgiving. I'm certain that both of the confirmed nominees wanted to spend time with their families."

Chatterjee later said that there are "no Machiavellian games here" and "both of them will be sworn in short order."

Shortly after Chatterjee's remarks, FERC officials said Glick, a former aide to Senate Democrats, would be sworn into his new position Wednesday, leaving the commission with two Republicans and two Democrats.

Read more [here](#).

ON TAP WEDNESDAY I: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee will vote on two Trump nominees: Andrew Wheeler to be the deputy administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Kathleen Hartnett White to join the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

The two nominees faced a skeptical committee earlier this month, with lawmakers especially digging into Hartnett White's qualifications for the CEQ role.

ON TAP WEDNESDAY II: The House Natural Resources Committee will hold a hearing on reform efforts for the National Environmental Policy Act.

Rest of Wednesday's agenda ...

The House Energy and Commerce Committee will hold a hearing on financial trading in electricity markets.

FROM THE HILL'S OPINION PAGE:

Two writers make their case for and against Hartnett White: Kevin Roberts, the director of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, calls her a "highly qualified" QEC pick, while Bart Ruth, the former president of the American Soybean Association, says she would be bad for farmers.

AROUND THE WEB:

A Wisconsin utility is shutting down a 1,200-megawatt coal-fired power plant, aiming to replace it with natural gas and solar, the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel reports.

Wind power is set to overtake coal in Texas, the Houston Chronicle reports.

Rural electric companies in Arizona are increasingly turning to solar power, Arizona Central reports.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

Check out Tuesday's stories...

-Trump administration approves Arctic Ocean oil exploration

-Tax bill with ANWR provision clears Senate Budget Committee

-Trump to shrink national monuments next week: report

-Energy regulator denies 'conspiracy' to delay addition of new commissioners

-Activist group again sues EPA over encrypted app documents

-Sanders presents \$146B plan to help Puerto Rico

Join The Hill on Wednesday, November 29, for Leadership in Action: The Hill's Newsmaker Series featuring **Rep. Mia Love (R-Utah)**. Our conversation will address the need for bipartisanship on Capitol Hill and ways to improve communication across party lines. RSVP Here

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